

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Stripp Vows to Support Governor's Action Nullifying Anti-Privatization Measure



State Representative John E. Stripp today vowed to support Governor Rell if the Democrat-controlled state legislature attempts to overturn an action she took last week to kill a measure that would have severely restricted the state's ability to award contracts to non-governmental organizations and other private entities.

"The action taken by Governor Rell was necessary to protect Connecticut taxpayers and many of the state's most vulnerable citizens," said Representative Stripp, R-135th District. "The governor vetoed a state contracting reform proposal (Senate Bill 94) that would have provided the legal basis for the anti-privatization measure, which had been added as an amendment to a budget implementation bill (House Bill 7502) that received final legislative approval June 28th. If the General Assembly's majority Democrats try to override the governor's veto, I will vote to sustain it."

The Governor issued an Executive Order June 30th which implements the positive state contracting reforms the vetoed bill would have put in place. The majority Democrats will need 101 votes in the House (two-thirds) to override the Governor's veto. The anti-privatization amendment passed the House on an 83-49 party line vote late Tuesday, June 28th, with most Democrats supporting it and most Republicans opposed.

"The anti-privatization measure would have tied the hands of state government when it comes to choosing the most efficient and cost effective ways of providing services to the people of Connecticut," Representative Stripp said. "Although state employees are the people best qualified to provide state services such as highway and bridge maintenance, law enforcement and protecting abused and neglected children; other services can be performed just as effectively and at less cost to taxpayers by non-governmental organizations and the business community."

"The anti-privatization proposal was developed by state employee union leaders who want to maximize the number of people employed by the State of Connecticut to expand the size of their bargaining units. They lobbied heavily for this measure and succeeded in gaining support for it from most Democrat legislators," Representative Stripp said. "While this measure might have helped the state employee unions increase the number of people they represent, it would have hurt Connecticut taxpayers, who would have been

stuck with the bill for the salaries and benefits for the additional state employees who would have been hired if this legislation had gone on the books.”

“It would have meant significantly higher costs to the state to provide services for the mentally retarded, individuals who need substance abuse treatment; and prisoners seeking to re-enter society through half-way houses,” Representative Stripp said. “Restricting the state’s ability to award contracts to non-governmental organizations at a time when tax dollars are scarce also would have discouraged the state from expanding services to Connecticut’s most vulnerable citizens at a time when they need them the most.”

The legislation would have prohibited the state from awarding contracts to provide services valued at \$500,000 or more to non-profit organizations or other private entities until June 30, 2007, unless the contract constituted an ‘emergency procurement’ under state law.